

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO USLO PEKING

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

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E.O. 11652: XGDS 1, 3

TAGS: PFOR, CH, US

SUBJECT: SUPPLEMENT TO WEEKLY STATUS REPORT

THE TAIWAN QUESTION

1. A WESTERN DIPLOMAT IN WASHINGTON HAS INFORMED US THAT SOME OFFICIALS OF THE PRC LIAISON OFFICE ARE BEGINNING TO TELL DIPLOMATS AND JOURNALISTS THAT, WHILE PEKING IS PATIENT ON THE TAIWAN QUESTION, THERE MAY BE A LIMIT TO THAT PATIENCE. ONE PRCLO OFFICIAL EVEN WENT SO FAR AS TO IMPLY A CONNECTION BETWEEN FRAYING PRC PATIENCE OVER TAIWAN AND THE WITHDRAWAL OF US MARINE GUARDS.

2. HONG KONG CONGEN HAS REPORTED THAT A US BUSINESSMAN AT THE CANTON FAIR ASKED HIS CHINESE HOSTS ABOUT THE STATE OF US-PRC TRADE RELATIONS, CITING THE POSTPONEMENT OF THE CCPIT VISIT AND THE LACK OF VISAS FOR CONGEN OFFICERS FOR

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THE FAIR. IN RESPONSE HE WAS REFERRED TO THE SHANGHAI

COMMUNIQUE AND MENTION WAS MADE IN PARTICULAR OF THE APPOINTMENT OF AMBASSADOR UNGER TO TAIPEI. THIS FOLLOWS CLOSELY THE LINE OF THE VICE MINISTER OF FOREIGN TRADE WHO TOLD A VISITING DELEGATION OF US STATE GOVERNORS ON MAY 19 THAT THERE COULD BE LITTLE PROGRESS IN BILATERAL TRADE UNTIL THE POLITICAL "HANDICAPS" WERE REMOVED.

3. WHILE THESE STATEMENTS APPEAR MORE AND MORE FREQUENTLY AT LOWER LEVELS, AND OBVIOUSLY REFLECT SOME SORT OF GUIDANCE FROM PEKING (ALTHOUGH WE SUSPECT THE TIE-IN WITH THE MARINE GUARDS WAS A LOCAL FLOURISH), THE SAME SENTIMENTS ARE NOT ECHOED IN SUCH DIRECT FORM AT HIGHER LEVELS. VICE FOREIGN MINISTER CH'IAO KUAN-HUA, FOR EXAMPLE, TOLD THE GOVERNORS THAT, THOUGH PEKING PREFERRED AN EARLY SETTLEMENT OF THE TAIWAN QUESTION (I.E. US DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS AND RELATED TIES), PEKING WAS NOT IMPATIENT. HE EXPRESSED UNDERSTANDING THAT THE US FELT IT MUST MAINTAIN RELATIONS WITH THE ROC AT THIS TIME.

4. VICE PREMIER TENG HSIAO-P'ING IN LATE MAY TOLD FORMER BRITISH PRIME MINISTER EDWARD HEATH THAT THE US IS IMPLEMENTING THE SHANGHAI COMMUNIQUE, AND HE REFERRED SPECIFICALLY TO TROOP DRAWDOWNS IN TAIWAN. TENG CAUTIONED, HOWEVER, THAT "THERE ARE SOME" WHO WOULD LIKE THE US TO HAVE RELATIONS WITH BOTH TAIPEI AND PEKING, WHICH, HE OBSERVED, IS IMPOSSIBLE.

5. OUR OVERALL IMPRESSIONS:

-- THE TOP LEADERSHIP PREFERS TO EXPRESS ITS FIRM VIEW THAT THE TAIWAN QUESTION MUST BE SOLVED SATISFACTORILY BETWEEN US (ALTHOUGH NOT NECESSARILY BETWEEN TAIPEI AND PEKING) BEFORE FURTHER SUBSTANTIVE PROGRESS IN OUR RELATIONSHIP CAN BE ACHIEVED, BUT AT THE SAME TIME TO ADOPT AN AIR OF TOLERANCE AND PATIENCE.

-- IN THE MEANTIME, OFF-AND-ON BUT GENERALLY INCREASING PRESSURE ON THE USG OVER THE TAIWAN ISSUE IS BEING APPLIED PRIMARILY THROUGH LOWER LEVEL CONTACTS WITH THE PRC'S "CONSTITUENCY" IN THE US PRIVATE SECTOR--PARTICU-
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LARLY THOSE ACADEMICS AND BUSINESSMEN WHO ARE SENSITIVE TO THREATS OF REPRISALS IN THE TRADE AND EXCHANGES FIELD.

-- DESPITE THIS GAMESMANSHIP, AND DESPITE PEKING'S CURRENT LINE THAT THE PRIMARY SOVIET THREAT IS AGAINST EUROPE, JAPAN AND THE US RATHER THAN AGAINST CHINA, THERE IS NO INDICATION THAT PEKING REALLY FEELS THE BASIC RATIONALE FOR IMPROVED RELATIONS WITH THE US HAS

CHANGED.
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